

AGENDA
SUISUN MARSH TECHCOMM MEETING

DWR Environmental Services Office, Large Conference Room
9:30 am, October 28, 1999

ADMINISTRATION

1. Agenda Changes, Announcements, and Other Business
2. July 29, 1999 Summary
3. Next meeting: 9:30 am, Thursday, January 27, 2000
DWR Environmental Services Office
Large Conference Room

DWR REPORT

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 4. Monitoring Station Update | Mike Floyd |
| 5. Water Quality Monitoring/1998 Annual Report | Liz Cook |
| 6. 1996, 1997, 1998 SMSCG Annual Fisheries Monitoring Reports | Eliza Sater/Leslie Millett |
| 7. SMSCG Modification test | Leslie Millett/Mike Floyd |
| 8. SMPA ECAT | Terri Gaines |
| 9. CALFED Suisun Marsh Levee Subteam | Chris Enright |
| 10. Suisun Ecological Workgroup | Eliza Sater |
| 11. Roaring River Levee Repair | Terri Gaines |
| 12. Morrow Island Levee Repairs / Fish Screen | Kamyar Guivetchi |

DFG REPORT

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 13. Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse Trapping | Melinda Dorin/ Patty Finrock |
| 14. SM Vegetation Survey | Kari Lewis |
| 15. Low D.O. Drainage in Peytonia/Boynton Sloughs | Laurie Briden |

SRCD REPORT

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 16. Renewal of USACE Regional General Permit | Steve Chappell |
| 17. Mosquito Abatement Program | Steve Chappell |

OTHER BUSINESS

MEETING SUMMARY
SUISUN MARSH TECHCOMM MEETING

July 29, 1999

DWR, Central District, Large Conference Room

ATTENDEES

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Steven Chappell, SRCD | Heidi Rooks, DWR |
| Terri Gaines, DWR | Eliza Sater, DWR |
| Dawn Friend, DWR | Bryan McFadin, DWR |
| Kamyar Guivetchi, DWR | Brad Tom, DWR |
| Stephen Berger, RWQCB | Chris Enright, DWR |
| Kate Le, DWR | Melinda Dorin, DFG |
| Marla Macoubrie, USFWS | |

ADMINISTRATION

Item 1 – Agenda Changes and Announcements

Some people didn't receive the July 1999 agenda via e-mail, so addresses in the TECHCOMM reflector will be checked and tested.

Terri Gaines will report for Liz Cook on items 4 and 11. Melinda Dorin reported for Patty Finrock and Kari Lewis on items 12 and 13, respectively.

Item 2 – April 29, 1998 Meeting Summary

No changes to the minutes.

Item 3 - Next TECHCOMM Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 28, 1999 at 9:30 am, DWR ESO Large Conference Room.

DWR REPORT

Item 4 - Water Quality Monitoring

Summary provided by Liz Cook:

The figures provided are plots of the progressive mean specific electrical conductances measured at DWR's 5 compliance stations (Collinsville, National Steel, Beldons, Sunrise and Volanti) plus two monitoring sites (Morrow Island and Ibis) for the months April and May 1999. Data from the Morrow Island and Ibis monitoring sites are included per request from Steve Chappell during the previous

TECHCOMM meeting.

The progressive mean of the specific electrical conductance remained well below regulatory standards at all sites during April and May 1999. The low values measured are attributed to relatively high Delta outflow occurring during this period. Small fluctuations in the progressive mean of the specific electrical conductance are also attributed to fluctuations in measured Delta outflow.

The final report for the 1998/99 compliance season will be mailed out on about August 4, 1999. It will include the plots made available today in case there aren't enough to go around.

Chris Enright requested that copies of the figures handed out be made back-to-back rather than one per page.

Item 5 – Morrow Island Levee Repairs / Fish Screen

Kamyar Guivetchi: see item 6

Item 6 – SMPA ECAT

Summary provided by Terri Gaines:

ECAT continues to meet monthly with participation from DWR, USBR, DFG, Grizzly Island and Bay-Delta, SRCD, USFWS and USACE (San Francisco Bay Region). Topics discussed include Morrow Island Distribution System mitigation. ECAT approved developing an additional 57 acres at Island Slough for Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse habitat. Also, the fish screen options for the MIDS have been discussed. At this time, there are two designs: a flat plate structure and a series of six conical screens. A final design selection is expected sometime this summer.

ECAT decided to pursue joint consultation with the FWS for both Amendment Three and the renewal of the regional general permit. An initiation letter was sent to FWS on July 22.

Other topics discussed include Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse trapping and the development of workplans for Suisun Marsh Monitoring.

As an informational item, Terri added that the Suisun Marsh Vegetation Survey has begun under the direction of Dr. Todd Keeler-Wolfe at the National Heritage Division of DFG. The survey protocols call for a GIS to be developed using the aerial surveys, satellite imagery, and ground-truthing.

Item 7 – CALFED Suisun Marsh Levee Subteam

Summary provided by Chris Enright:

Chris Enright presented the status of the CALFED Suisun Marsh Levee Subteam activities. CALFED is gathering information on costs, benefits, and linkages to CALFED objectives of including Suisun Marsh levees in the CALFED Levee Program. The Suisun Marsh Levee Subteam was formed to gather this information. The group is using modeling analysis to identify the impacts of levee breaches, shallow water habitat and tidal marsh restoration on system salinity. The shallow water habitat scenarios have been completed; the tidal marsh restoration scenarios are in progress. Independent verification of modeling results is being conducted by CALFED contract with Resource Management Associates. A web site, intended for presentation of modeling analysis, will be ready in August. The project is scheduled for completion by the end of August 1999.

Marla Macoubrie asked why the levee breach scenarios were being modeled. Chris responded that it gives us an idea as to what may happen if the levees were breached during a flood event and not repaired, indicating the importance of maintenance. He added that these scenarios also provide important information about using levee breaches for habitat restoration. Bryan McFadin agreed that these scenarios provide useful information on the hydrology of restored areas.

Item 8 – Suisun Ecological Workgroup

Summary provided by Eliza Sater:

Most components of the Suisun Ecological Workgroup's draft report have been posted on SEW's web site. Components of the report that have been posted on the web include the introduction; reports from the Brackish Marsh Vegetation Subcommittee, the Waterfowl Subcommittee, and the Aquatic Habitat Subcommittee; an alternative recommendation presented by Frank Wernette from DFG; and a section on Monitoring and Data Gaps. The report by the Wildlife Subcommittee is forthcoming. A notice will be posted at the beginning of August informing interested parties that the entire report is now available and that the comment period has been extended until August 15th so that interested parties have an opportunity to review the document as a whole. The report can be accessed at http://www.iep.ca.gov/suisun_eco_workgroup/draft_report/.

Item 9 – Comprehensive Data Review

Summary provided by Patty Finfrock:

The last chapters are out for review, and I am awaiting comments. I am also waiting for the Fish chapter to include in the final report. Once these are done, the main document will be formatted and go out for external review. While external review happens, I will format and complete the 13 appendices.

Item 10 – SMSCG Steering Committee

Summary provided by Heidi Rooks:

Plans are being made for the fall evaluation. The tentative schedule has been compiled (see Table) based on water temperatures being less than or equal to 20° C in the Marsh. If they are, then salmon tagging will begin on September 13, 1999.

Draft Tentative Schedule for Flashboard Evaluation 1999

| Operat-ional Phase | Configuration | Activity-Flashboards | Activity-Gates | Tagging Dates | Monitoring Dates |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| I | Modified flashboards, gates operating | Install modified flashboards September 1 | Gates begin operating September 7 | September 13-18 | September 13-26 |
| II | Original flashboards, gates operating | Install original flashboards September 27 | Continue operating | September 30-October 6 | September 30-October 13 |
| III | No flashboards, no gate operation | Flashboards removed October 14 | Gate operation ceases October 14 | October 18-23 | October 18-31 |

Kamyar asked if Heidi might coordinate with O&M to work out a schedule of operation for the test. Heidi responded that this has already started via her discussions with Kate Le. As an informational aside, Kate added that Delta Field Division now has more time to work on the new software used to remotely operate the gates. They expect to have it completely installed and functional by September 1, 1999, and hope to test the timing near the end of August.

Item 11 – Roaring River Levee Repair

Summary provided by Liz Cook:

Environmental Specialists from DWR surveyed the north and south sides of the system for threatened and endangered plant species and salt marsh harvest mouse habitat on July 1, 1999. Four sites were identified, one inhabited by Mason's liliopsis along the shoreline where the construction barge is to offload materials, and three of pickleweed along the south levee at approximately miles 8.5, 11.0 and 11.5. Sites were marked with wetland boundary flagging tied to 3 foot wooden stakes set in the ground.

The construction contract for levee repair and improvement was awarded to Steelhead Construction, the company that contracted for the first phase of the project last year.

A tailgate session lead by DWR ESO staff to advise the contractor and his employees of the marked locations and other environmental constraints was provided on the morning of July 14, 1999 just prior to work commencing.

To date, widening of the south levee is nearly complete with mostly just surface smoothing and the addition of aggregate base remaining to be done. The

installation of the geofoam blocks has also begun along the section of the north levee corresponding to approximately mile 1.0.

Visits to the construction site are being made at least twice weekly by ESO staff to ensure compliance with the environmental constraints and to provide a presence should questions arise. Biweekly ECAT meetings are also being held to ensure communication and smooth operations. To date, marked sensitive habitat has not been disturbed.

Work is scheduled to be completed by September 30, 1999.

DFG REPORT

Item 12 – Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse Trapping

Summary provided by Melinda Dorin:

Trapping for Salt Marsh Harvest Mice on the conservation areas is part of the mitigation and monitoring requirements under the Suisun Marsh Plan of Protection. The goal is to obtain 1500 acres of suitable salt marsh harvest mouse habitat and manage it to the benefit of the species.

The methodology for trapping was approved by the SMPA ECAT and is being conducted by a joint team of DWR and DFG personnel. The areas trapped this year are at Joice Island, Hill Slough East (2 areas) and Hill Slough West (2 areas), pond 12F, three other areas on pond 11 at Grizzly Island and at Benecia. Two areas trapped last year that presence was not detected, will be retrapped in 1999; Joice Island and Hill Slough East. I have maps of all of these areas if anyone is interested.

Presence in all the areas trapped so far was high. Usually the trapping effort takes place for four nights, but on several occasions trap success was so high that we trapped for only one night. Benecia, Crescent Unit, Hill Slough West Rush Ranch, Pond 12F and all three areas on Grizzly Island had presence.

Melinda added that they had a good catch at Island Slough, which has mixed vegetation with little pickleweed.

Item 13 – Suisun Marsh Vegetation Survey

Melinda Dorin:

Two people have been hired for ground-truthing, and were trained last week. They are now picking plots to survey and will send letters to the landowners requesting permission on Monday. They plan to start on DFG property and shift to private properties as they receive property access permission slips.

Steve Chappell added that Todd also has a mapping crew in the field. He also added that the pintail study by Mike Gazaza records day and night use of vegetation, which could be integrated with the vegetation data. Kamyar suggested reading the Winter 1999 IEP Newsletter article for background on the project and the new methodology.

SRCD REPORT

Item 14 – Acid (Red) Water Study Report

Steve Chappell:

Item 15 – Renewal of USACE Regional General Permit

Steve Chappell:

Item 16 – Waterfowl Feeding Ecology Study

Steve Chappell:

Item 17 – Landowner Workshop

Steve Chappell:

OTHER BUSINESS

TECHCOMM announcements, agendas and minutes will be distributed by way of e-mail to those people who signed up for electronic distribution.